Duping of Indian Workers Abroad

1702. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether several Indians duped in the Gulf on promise of good job but exploited on landing there; and

(b) the steps taken by Indian Embassy to assist such helpless persons in coming back to India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes. Some cases have come to the notice of the Government where Indian workers in the Gulf had been duped on promise of good jobs.

(b) In such cases, the Indian Missions/Posts render all possible assistance for the return of Indian nationals to India. This includes taking up the matter with authorities concerned and with the employers; facilitating local immigration clearance; and issuance of travel documents, if required.

Indo-China Relations

1703. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether both India and China are seriously engaged to address the issues for improving the relations;

(b) if so, the total number of meetings held between the two Governments;

(c) if so, whether further discussion between Indian and Chinese delegations on border dispute was held recently;

(d) if so, at what stage the border issue is at present; and

(e) whether Chinese attitude in solving the border dispute has changed a lot and it is willing to compromise on all border issues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) There exists a dialogue architecture covering a wide range of

issues and regular exchanges are taking place at various levels with the objective of achieving continuous improvement of bilateral relations.

(c) to (d) The third meeting of the Special Representatives of the Governments of India and China on the Boundary Question was held in New Delhi on July 26-27,2004. The meeting between the National Security Advisor, Shri J.N. Dixit and the Vice Foreign Minister, Mr. Dai Bingguo, Special Representatives of India and China respectively, was held in a friendly, constructive and cooperative atmosphere. The two sides agreed to hold the next meeting in Beijing at a mutually convenient date.

Kidnapping of truck drivers in Iraq

1704. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether three Indian truck drivers operating in Iraq have been kidnapped by a militant group which has threatened to behead them unless India ensures that no Indian provides any kind of service support to the US Army in Iraq;

(b) if so, the details in regard thereto;

(c) the measures taken by Government for safe release of these Indian truck drivers; and

(d) the success achieved in these efforts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED) : (a) and (b) On the night of 21st July, 2004 it was learnt from a news agency report that three Indian nationals identified as Antaryami Bains, Tilak Raj and Sukhdev Singh were among the seven persons taken hostage by an Iraqi group identified as "The Holders of the Black Banners". The hostages included in addition three Kenyans and one Egyptian. They were all employed as heavy vehicle drivers by the Kuwait based company, Kuwait and Gulf Link Transport Co. (KGL). The kidnappers in a statement reported by the media demanded withdrawal of all citizens including troops belonging to the countries of the hostages from Iraq and an end to the activities of the transport company in Iraq. The Group theratened to behead a hostage every 72 hours unless these demands are met.